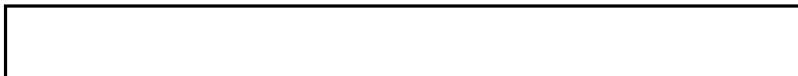


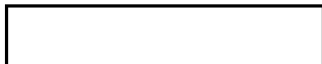
Chen

LLM



STAT
25 March 1971

SUGGESTED REPLY



I have your letter of March 12, 1971 which you enclose an article entitled "Opium War" from the February 26 issue of Private Eye.

As I understand the facts they are that the Meos have been fighting against vastly superior invading forces to preserve their way of life in a region which has been their homeland for more than a century. The existence of opium in Indochina is generally well known, but I understand that the relatively small amount grown by the Meo tribes is locally consumed and does not reach the export market. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding that efforts to encourage the Meos to grow rice and raise livestock and restrict opium growing have been successful over the last several years.

I just do not believe that one can correctly characterize what is transpiring in Laos as an opium war. I do appreciate your writing me to let me know your views and to determine the facts and I do hope that this letter is helpful in your search for the truth.

Sincerely,